

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 14347

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, IN

SUBJECT: OPENING OF AAFLI OFFICE IN INDIA

1. THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY IN CHARGE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS OF INTUC (CONGRESS-R SUPPORTED LABOR CONFEDERATION), H.D. MUKERJI, TOLD ASIAN AMERICAN FREE LABOR INSTITUTE (AAFLI) REPRESENTATIVE HERBERT WEAST THAT INTUC COULD NOT NOW SPONSOR AN AAFLI REQUEST TO OPEN A PERMANENT OFFICE IN INDIA. NUKERJI ACKNOWLEDGED THAT INTUC PRESIDENT BHAGAVATI HAD A VERY SUCCESSFUL VISIT TO THE US AS THE GUEST OF THE AFL-CIO LAST JULY, BUT EXPLAINED THAT INTUC'S POSITION IN THE CONGRESS (R) PARTY WAS NOT PRESENTLY VERY SECURE. AN ENDORSEMENT BY INTUC OF A PERMANENT AAFLI PRESENCE IN INDIA WOULD BE USED BY THE LEFT WING OF THE CONGRESS PARTY TO ATTACK INTUC. MOREOVER, THE CONGRESS PARTY'S COLLABORATION WITH THE CPI ALSO ARGUED AGAINST CLOSER INTUC-AFL-CIO RELATIONS AT THIS TIME. WITHIN THE INTUC EXECUTIVE BOARD THERE ARE CERTAIN MEMBERS WHO ARE OPPOSED TO THE OPENING OF AN AAFLI OFFICE. MUKERJI SAID THT THESE INDIVIDUALS MIGHT LOST THEIR EATS AT THE INTUC CONGRESS SCHEDULED FOR DECEMBER. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT THE OTHER REASONS BEHIND INTUC'S POSITION ON AAFLI WOULD CONTINUE TO BE CONTROLLING.

2. WEAST BELIEVES, AND WE AGREE, THAT AAFLI SHOULD ACCEPT MUKERJI'S STATEMENT AS REPRESENTING THE INTUC POSITION AND NOT RAISE THE ISSUE WITH BHAGAVATI. TO DO SO WOULD FORMALIZE THE NEGATIVE ANSWER WHICH MIGHT MAKE LATER RECONSIDERATION MORE DIFFICULT.

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3. WEAST'S PLAN AT THIS POINT (UNLESS OTHERWISE INSTRUCTED BY AAFLI) IS TO REMAIN IN INDIA UNTIL AFTER THE INTUC CONGRESS. AT THAT TIME HE THINKS THAT INTUC MIGHT MODIFY ITS POSITION, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF THE SECRETARY'S VISIT.

4. COMMENT: WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT THE AFL-CIO DESPITE THIS SETBACK WILL CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN ITS RELATIONS WITH INTUC ON AN AD HOC BASIS UNTIL THE INDIANS DECIDE THAT THEY ARE READY FOR A MORE FORMALIZED RELATIONSHIP SUCH AS THAT REPRESENTED BY THE OPENING OF AN AAFLI OFFICE.

5. AAFLI'S RELATIONS WITH THE HIND MAZDOOR SABHA (HMS, POLITICALLY INDEPENDENT) ARE MORE FAVORABLE. THE HMS' EXECUTIVE BOARD ADOPTED A RESOLUTION WELCOMING "THE POSSIBILITY OF MORE DEVELOPMENT IN THE INDO-AMERICAN BILATERAL TRADE UNION RELATIONS." WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT AAFLI CANNOT AND SHOULD NOT ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH AN OFFICE TO CONDUCT PROGRAMS WITH HMS ONLY.
SCHNEIDER

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